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BOOK REVIEWS



IN CHARGE OF

M. E. CAMERON, R.N.

SLEEP AND THE SLEEPLESS—SIMPLE RULES FOR OVERCOMING INSOMNIA.

By Joseph Collins, M.D., Physician to the Neurological Institute of New York. Price, \$1.00. Sturgis & Walton, New York.

Written primarily for the layman, this book is one that will commend itself to doctors and nurses and particularly the latter. Here one finds the specific regimen that must be followed if this bugbear, insomnia, is to be banished. The rule is laid down for the food, exercise, baths, dress, and mental attitude necessary to ensure sound and healthgiving slumbers. "The capacity to sleep can be acquired by effort in the same way as the capacity to think concretely or to run without getting out of breath." Such a declaration from an authority so indisputable as Dr. Collins is calculated to rouse the most self-centered victim alive, and the further uncompromising statement that "*the cultivation of the will is perhaps the most important step toward relief*" for the sufferer, will arrest the attention and direct the efforts of those who suffer from what seems to be a needless affliction, if indeed the will to sleep is sufficient to procure sleep. The popular fallacy that insomnia is the initial symptom of insanity is disposed of without ceremony and the author particularly states that "sleeplessness does not cause insanity. The victim may become depressed, irritable, excitable, inattentive, but his senses will not forsake him." Further, to the relief and comfort of a large class who sleep less than the usual number of hours, we are told that men of genius in many walks of life have made their record on one-half and even less than one-half the amount of sleep popularly considered necessary. When actual insomnia has the unfortunate victim in its grip, the treatment suggested is rather in the line of hygiene than of medicine and drugs, for while they may be prescribed for the purpose of procuring sleep they are in no way to be regarded as treatment for the habit of sleeplessness. This must be traced to its cause, which, when detected, must be removed.

OUR CHILDREN'S HEALTH—AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL. Edited by Charles E. Hecht, M.A. Published by The National Food Reform Association, 178 St. Stephen's House, Westminster.

The report of a conference on diet and hygiene in public, secondary

and private schools held at the Guildhall, London, May 13, 1912, with dietaries, press references, correspondence and other additional matter, makes a rather formidable volume which to readers who remember the private school of Dickens' story makes a record of progress that might cause comment in any country, most of all in England, noted for its conservatism. Turning the pages of this report one is constrained to ask if the girls and boys of England are in any way related to the python, remarkable for the huge quantity of food which it consumes at one eating; but immediately the question answers itself; the python eats at long intervals, British youth four or more times a day. In the paper contributed by Clement Dukes, M.D., F.R.C.P., Hon. Consulting Physician to Rugby School, under the heading of *Appetite*, we are told that while adults should rise from the table still hungry, children should reach a sense of repletion before leaving table. Again, "No work should ever be imposed upon boys and girls without previous sustenance. Food first, work afterwards." Truly *Oliver Twist* has been banished to the irrevocable past; and *Smike* has been avenged. The problem of our own country seems to be to obtain food cheaper—that of England to obtain better food, and better cooking, while economy comes in as only a third factor.

THE FEEDING OF NURSES. Report of the Proceedings at a Conference of Matrons of Hospitals and Similar Institutions, held at Caxton Hall, Westminster, with preface, by Dr. Robert Hutchison. Price, six pence. National Food Reform Association, 178 St. Stephen's House, Westminster.

The National Food Reform Association, which has for its object the enlightenment of public opinion on matters of diet, matters that make for social reform and national and domestic economy, seems to have heard somewhat of how nurses in institutions are fed. If nurses and institutions are in England and America at all similar it is time that matrons got together to discuss the matter. Dr. Hutchison in his preface treats the grievance rather lightly and thinks it calls for "a little more imagination on the part of matrons and cooks, and a little increased liberality on the part of committees." Certain it is that the institution workers of our country are loud and bitter in their complaints of the kind and quantity of the food that is served to them and no doubt would welcome some such action from their superintendents and matrons. The little book depicts many of the causes of discontent we are familiar with, lack of variety in the food, lack of skill in the cooking, lack of time for eating it, etc.